

# Better Business Focus

October 2020

Expert inspiration for a Better Business



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Better Business Focus is the essential key for business owners and managers. It achieves that by focusing on the way in which successful businesses compete and manage their organisations. It focuses on how people are recruited, coached and developed; on how marketing and selling is undertaken in professional markets as well as in markets with intense competition; on how technology and the Internet is reshaping the face of domestic and home business; and on how people are being equipped with new skills and techniques. In short, it offers expert inspiration for a better business.

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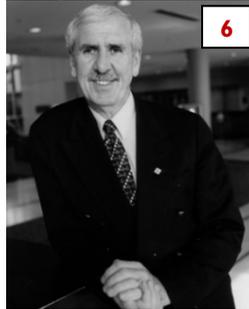
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David Finkel

## It's time to check in with your staff regarding Coronavirus

Many business owners have stopped talking about the elephant in the room

Six months ago, the world as we knew it changed. Business owners all over the country were dealing with **uncertainty** as we navigated the waters of quarantine, remote working, and new local and state regulations. For some business owners, quarantine meant having to rethink the way that they did business and come up with new and creative ways to reach their customer base. Others saw a sharp increase in their orders and had to increase their means of production and distribution to keep up with demand.

In the beginning, we spent a lot of time working with our team members to reassure them and help **ease their fears** in this time of uncertainty. But as time goes on, and this new way of life has become our new normal, many business owners have stopped talking about the elephant in the room.

Which is why today, I want to encourage you to check in with your staff regarding coronavirus.

### Let Them Know Where the Business Stands

Chances are your team already has a good idea of how your business is going in a post-Corona landscape. But, as a leader, it is important to communicate with your team and give them regular updates regarding your business growth or pain points. Celebrate the victories together, no matter how small:

In March and April, we saw a decrease in the number of leads

coming in for our services, which was not surprising, but once we implemented the new virtual quoting process, not only were we able to recover and meet our goals for May, but this past three months we have actually seen an increase in leads coming into the system. I think that we are in a good place as a company and I am really excited to see how our numbers look for the fall.

### Thank Them for Their Contribution

**Anxiety** and stress levels are off the charts for many Americans right now, and many are dealing with children at home doing virtual learning, a spouse who may be laid off, or friends and loved ones who have gotten sick or are in quarantine. Never underestimate the impact and importance of saying thank you right now. Your staff has had to learn new systems and programs to be successful in a remote environment, they have had to have hard conversations with clients and prospects, and they have done it all while worrying about their own health and safety.

Say thank you and celebrate the work that they have put in to help your business weather this storm.

### Keep the Dialogue Open

The final piece of advice I have for you is to keep the dialogue open. We aren't back to normal yet, and we won't be for some time. So, remember to check in with your team on a regular basis and keep the lines of communication open. Remind them of the reasons that you serve your marketplace. Remind them of the contribution that you

are making to your client base and the world. Remind them of the value they create and the lives that they touch by logging in every day.

Be intentional and thoughtful with your team during these times.

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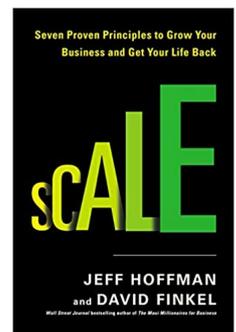
David Finkel is co-author of, [SCALE: 7 Proven Principles to Grow Your Business and Get Your Life Back](#) (written with Priceline.com co-founder Jeff Hoffman), and one of the nation's most respected business thinkers. A *Wall Street Journal* and *Business Week* best selling author of 11 business books, David's weekly business owner e-letter is read by 100,000 business owners around the world. David is the CEO of [Maui Mastermind](#), one of the nation's premier business coaching companies. Over the past 20 years, David and the other Maui coaches have personally scaled and sold over \$2 billion of businesses.

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Jeff Haden

## How Bill Gates approaches problem solving: Don't reinvent the wheel

While Bill Gates is known for innovative thinking, his approach to achieving major goals leans heavily on the intelligence of others

Having the right answers is important, but success can also be achieved by asking the right questions.

Take Southwest Airlines founder Herb Kelleher, who **regularly asked himself one question**: "Will this (decision) make Southwest Airlines the low-cost provider?" Or Steve Jobs, who **regularly asked one question**: "How many times did you say no today?"

Add **Bill Gates** to the list. According to the **most recent post** on his GatesNotes blog:

Ever since I was a teenager, I've tackled every big new problem the same way: by starting off with two questions. I used this technique at Microsoft, and I still use it today. I ask these questions literally every week about Covid-19.

Here they are: *Who has dealt with this problem well? And what can we learn from them?*



We all tend to work and live within self-created boundaries. We do the kinds of things we normally do. We read the kinds of books we normally read. We interact with the kind of people we normally interact with. In the process, we learn a little more about the things we already know. That feels like progress.

And it is.

But what if you step outside your self-created boundaries? What if you decide to go where you normally don't go, and do what you normally don't do?

That, in a nutshell, is the Gates approach. If you want to solve a huge problem or achieve a huge goal, don't waste time trying to reinvent the wheel.

Instead ...

### Find a great wheel you can adopt for yourself

When I worked in book manufacturing, I was part of a group that toured a nearby Coors bottling plant. We came away with more productivity improvement ideas than we could implement in a year.

The facility was impressive, but it's not like Coors was doing incredible things. They were just doing different - to us - things.

We knew what we knew. But we didn't know what *they* knew, and that we could apply those things to make ourselves even better.

I've had countless similar experiences. I went riding with pro mountain biker **Jeremiah Bishop** and discovered more about cycling in 30 minutes than I had learned in the previous year. I worked out with **FitnessGenes co-founder and CEO Dr. Dan Reardon** and discovered more about lifting in that hour than I had learned over years of trying to gain strength and size. Talking with **Navy SEAL Ray Care** totally changed how I think about perseverance and determination, even though **after doing 100,000 pushups, I thought I already knew a lot about how to stay the course.**

The same has happened to you. You've met people who totally changed your perspective. You've read books that made you think differently about your life, whether professionally or personally. You've gone places, and done things you normally wouldn't do, that made you a smarter and better person.

Yet we don't actively seek out those experiences.

Take a page from the Gates playbook. Instead of trying to brainstorm your way to a new solution to a problem or a new process to achieve a goal, ask yourself two questions:

**"Who has dealt with this problem well? And what can I learn from them?"**

The best way to solve a problem or achieve a goal is to find people who have actually solved that problem or achieved that goal. Start from the end, the solution or achievement, and then work backward.

That approach is the great equalizer, because you won't need to be unusually creative. Or unusually smart. Or unusually connected, or educated, or wealthy.

You just need to be willing to look, and study, and then follow the steps and process you discover.

Best of all, you'll follow that process knowing - instead of hoping - that your hard work will pay off.

Because what works for others can definitely work for you.

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### About the Author

Jeff Haden learned much of what he knows about business and technology as he worked his way up in the manufacturing industry from forklift driver to manager of a 250-employee book plant. Everything else he picks up from ghostwriting books for some of the smartest innovators and leaders he knows in business. He has written more than 30 non-fiction books, including four Business and Investing titles that reached #1 on Amazon's bestseller list. Jeff is a contributing editor for [inc.com](http://inc.com) and a LinkedIn Influencer.

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Dr Lynda Shaw

# The importance of being humble post lockdown

More now than ever, when people around us are struggling with health worries, unemployment and a host of other losses, anxieties, or difficulties, it is an important time to try and be more humble and to think of one another. Make being humble one of your five a day.

1. **Be more humble...by focusing less on what you don't have** like the latest trainers or the summer holiday that you wanted to take and try to take a few moments each day to appreciate how fortunate you are, perhaps in having good health, or a secure job, or friends and family who check in on you. By practicing gratitude and asking for less, we can build our sense of self-worth and better our physical well-being and reduce our levels of stress.
2. **Be more humble... by understanding that this year in particular has hit some of us harder than others.** Even though our experiences are different, it really is important that we deeply consider the feelings and wellbeing of friends, colleagues, neighbours and family whenever possible. Who can you help?
3. **Be more humble... by valuing and listening to others.** We should spend time talking to loved ones, friends, colleague and our children, asking them questions, listening to how they are feeling and giving them an opportunity to express themselves. Giving your time can be the greatest gift of all.

4. **Be more humble...by checking yourself when you feel the need to self-promote.** Rather than showing off what you have, a humble person is more likely to share what they have and consider other people's feelings if they are unable to have the same good fortune. Perhaps consider how posting on social media about how you are having the absolutely best time might make others struggling only feel worse.

5. **Be more humble... by admitting you don't have all the answers** and don't be afraid to ask for help. There is no shame in reaching out and learning from, and being helped by, others. All we have to do then is reciprocate.

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### About the Author

Dr Lynda Shaw is cognitive neuroscientist and chartered psychologist, a Forbes contributor, an Associate Fellow of the British Psychological Society, a Fellow of the Royal Society of Medicine, a Fellow of the Professional Speakers Association, as well as an entrepreneur and author of adult and children's books.

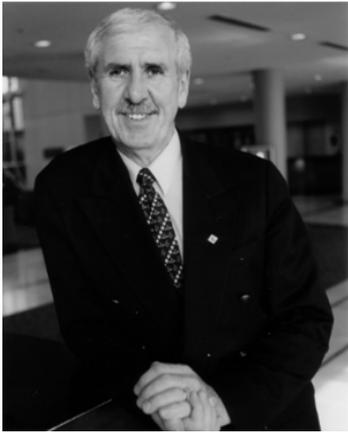
Dr Shaw has lectured in Psychology and Neuroscience at various Universities in the UK and conducted research on brain function and impairment, specialising in consciousness, emotion and the effects of ageing. She was honoured to receive the Professional Speaking Award of Excellence in October 2017, it is the highest accolade for UK speakers given by their peers.

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Barry Urquhart

## Downturn highlights – online marketing, advertising weaknesses, deficiencies

Online communications perform best when consumers are actively searching brand names, product specifications, prices and value-packages. Those channels have exposed inadequacies when consumers have retreated from the marketplace, as at present, and have a need to be stimulated and titillated to contemplate purchases, prefer specific brand names and to re-enter the marketplace.

By nature, much of digital marketing is transactional and expedites the search routine, buying process and transaction. Online purchase volumes for countless Australian businesses, across a broad spectrum of sectors, regions products, services and applications actually declined in both January and February this year. During that period, enquiries for and sales of new homes, property, motor vehicles, electrical appliances and furniture declined.

Significantly, whether promoted on-line or in mass media, price discounting was an ineffective traffic and sales generator. A major over-riding influence at present is concern about incomes, cash-flows and job security.

Barry Urquhart, Managing Director of Marketing Focus, has just completed a detailed strategic analysis and audit of online and mass media marketing. He said:

“It is evident that when consumers are passive, social media effectiveness falls.

One major consequence of a dominance of online and digital marketing is the decline in brand-name recognition, preference and loyalty. In many instances the highest measure of loyalty is assigned to the sites and landing-pages of tech companies, including Amazon, E-bay, Twitter and Google.

Many discretionary purchases have been indefinitely delayed. Overseas and cruise holidays have been removed from consideration. Cancellation rates are rapidly increasing.

Much of online communication lacks emotion. Therefore, it will not create a sense of urgency in a largely NOW marketplace, in which significant percentages of consumers are seeking instant gratification.

Clearly, advertising content, context and channels need to be reviewed, refined and recalibrated.

The consuming public at large, is tentative. They need to be tempted, reassured and encouraged to re-enter the marketplace.

Online and digital marketing have important roles to fulfil. They need initial and pre-emptive priming of mass media messaging, part of which has traditionally been centred on fun and humour.

Positive, confident, focused and energised service providers, at the point of purchase, are essential to accelerate and conclude the purchase process.

*Alas – Man and marketing can't survive with online marketing and advertising alone.”*

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### About the Author:

Barry Urquhart, Managing Director, Marketing Focus, Perth, is an inspiring speaker, author of Australia's top two selling books on customer service and an international consultant on dynamic innovation and creativity.

Barry is author of six books, including the two largest selling publications on service excellence in Australasia. He is a regular commentator of consumer issues on ABC radio, is featured on a series of interview topics on “Today Tonight” and contributes articles to 47 magazines throughout the world.

He is one of Australia's most active keynote speakers and is an internationally recognised authority on quality customer service, consumer behaviour and creative visual merchandising. Marketing Focus is a Perth based market research and strategic planning practice. The firm and Barry consult to multinational, national and local entities in the private sector and the public sector. He is a former lecturer in Marketing and Management at the Curtin University of Technology and has degrees in marketing, political science and sociology.

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Marla Tabaka

## Entrepreneurs who use vision boards are more likely to achieve success

As I was training to become a coach (remember, this was about 20 years ago), the whole Law of Attraction/Vision Board concept was rejected by most of our population. Thankfully, with the advancements in neuroscience we can see how these seemingly magical tools work to help us manifest a better life. Since they've become more mainstream (alleluia!) it's been fun and exciting to speak about things like metaphysics and the wonders of neuroscience without having to disguise the conversation in conventional wording. So here we go!

You started your business because you had a vision, right? Yet, how often do you spend time feeling excited by your vision? Do you actually visualize the outcome of your hard work, or do you get stuck in the "hard work" mentality, leaving the celebrations for the years ahead?

So, get this. A recent survey revealed that, among respondents, one in five successful entrepreneurs used vision boards in the business building process. In fact, 91 percent of them attribute their current (strong) financial position to having envisioned a plan to get there. These are smart entrepreneurs!

So, can you do it as well? Of course, you can! Here's the thing—it's simple! That's both good and not so good because it's so simple that people tend to break the habit of visualizing daily, or they don't do it at all. It may be difficult for them to believe

anything that lacks complexity could be so powerful.

I have a confession to make. Visualization makes up most of my marketing plan. Yup, you heard me right. Of course, I market, but I visualize more. And, here's a great example of what happens when I do.

Two days ago, I was working with a client to help her grasp the concept of visualizing to create strongly positive emotions around success. You see, it's the emotion that goes into your visualization that produces the magic sauce. More on that later.

I got so wrapped up in the conversation with my client that I felt the familiar surge of joy that I associate with onboarding a new client. I never focus on the money, or any other self-serving aspect of working with a new entrepreneur. I place all of my attention on the joy of knowing that I can help them achieve their dreams and what that means to them. The feelings are powerful and profound.

After our session I checked my email only to find a consultation request from a new prospect. Smiling at the wonder of it all, I picked up the phone and he made the time to speak with me on the spot. It was a ten-minute conversation, and he became my next new client.

That is how powerful the visualization process can be. This isn't voodoo magic. The energy I generated in my client call helped me to listen intently, to say just the right things (meaningfully, of

course), and to radiate the energy that helped my soon to be client feel the synergy.

What about the vision board?

As you may notice, there was no vision board involved in my client manifestation experience. What many people don't know is that the pictures on a vision board are only a means to an end. They are tools to help you tap into feelings, like excitement, joy, happiness, and feelings associated with self-empowerment. Once you practice with your vision board on a regular basis you may be able to achieve a high-level vibration without the support of a board. That's what happened in my client call.

Now let's get a touch nerdy about the subject. Ha!

Why do vision boards work?

Your brain is malleable and trainable; it can even rewire itself. This remarkable capacity is referred to as neuroplasticity, and it allows you to train your brain for success. Visualization is one of the most powerful and efficient ways to do this.

The rewiring process harnesses two key components: mirror neurons and neural resonance. Mirror neurons are vital to the learning process and planning our actions, as well as understanding the intentions behind them. Neural resonance is involved in focus and problem-solving. Visualization can help us to rewire our brains resulting in greater access to ideas, solutions, and motivation.

The selective attention involved during visualization imprints important things on the part of your brain that filters out unnecessary information and focuses instead on information that's relevant. Your brain laser-focuses on your goals and introduces you to the things you need to make them happen. This is what we call The Law of Attraction at work. Sometimes it feels like opportunities and abundance come from nowhere, but now you can see the science behind it. However, let's not negate the fact that good stuff happens all on its own too.

In my next post I'm going to hit on other things to know, as well as how to become a vision boarding entrepreneur yourself. Stay tuned, ok?

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### About the Author

Internationally known business strategist, national radio show host ([www.bigpitchradio.com](http://www.bigpitchradio.com)), and Inc. Magazine ([inc.com/author/marla-tabaka](http://inc.com/author/marla-tabaka)) author, Marla Tabaka helps entrepreneurs achieve personal happiness and financial success. Her integrative approach to coaching combines mindset management and strategic planning, resulting in multi-million dollar businesses for many of her small business clients.

Marla has appeared in noteworthy publications such as American Express Open, Fox Business News, TIME Business, The Huffington Post, Entrepreneur.com, Social Media Mags, and The Business Intelligence Report. If you would like to take the next steps toward a healthy life and business, contact Marla for a complimentary consultation.

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Mike Shipulski

## The courage to speak up

If you see things differently than others, congratulations. You're thinking for yourself.

If you find yourself pressured into thinking like everyone else, that's a sign your opinion threatens. It's too powerful to be dismissed out-of-hand, and that's why they want to shut you up.

If the status quo is angered by your theory, you're likely onto something. Stick to your guns.

If your boss doesn't want to hear your contrarian opinion, that's because it cannot be easily dismissed. That's reason enough to say it.

If you disagree in a meeting and your sentiment is actively dismissed, dismiss the dismitter. And say it again.

If you're an active member of the project and you are not invited to the meeting, take it as a compliment. Your opinion is too powerful to defend against. The only way for the group-think to survive is to keep you away from it. Well done.

If your opinion is actively and repeatedly ignored, it's too powerful to be acknowledged. Send a note to someone higher up in the organization. And if that doesn't work, send it up a level higher still. Don't back down.

If you look into the future and see a train wreck, set up a meeting with the conductor and tell them what you see.



When you see things differently, others will try to silence you and tell you you're wrong. Don't believe them. The world needs people like you who see things as they are and have the courage to speak the truth as they see it.

Thank you for your courage.

This article originally appeared on:

<https://www.innovationexcellence.com/blog/2019/12/09/the-courage-to-speak-up/>

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### About the Author:

Mike strives to define best practices and tools for *Product and Technology Development* and embed them into company culture. With that, practices and tools become a working part of how a company does business instead of ending up in a thick handbook that defines how things "should be done" which is read by no one. To Mike, behavior is most important.

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Soren Kaplan

# A simple template for key performance indicators (KPIs) get people focused on what really matters

Management guru Peter Drucker once said, "What's measured improves." So true.

The problem is that most teams don't have clear key performance indicators (KPIs) to measure the success of their strategies and projects. Sure, they may have goals, but without clear KPIs, they don't have a way to know quantitatively that they're on or off track. As a result, many teams wait until the end of the quarter, or year, to assess their real progress. And by that time, it's usually far too late for a course correction.

So how do you create the most meaningful KPIs for your team and organization? Here are three steps:

## 1. Define and quantify success.

KPIs should ideally be quantifiable so you know whether or not you've actually accomplished a goal or task. For example, your sales achieved, market share percentage, or number of new customers is fully quantifiable. If quantifying success seems too challenging, you can create "binary" measurements for a goal like "achieved" or "not achieved."

For instance, if your marketing plan is focus on getting PR coverage in a major publication by the end of the year, you will either achieve the media placement or not. But if you're going for multiple media placements, you might quantify this KPI by defining it as "three media placements by the end of the year."

## 2. Diversify performance metrics.

When defining your KPIs, go for a blend of "leading" and "lagging" indicators. Leading indicators help forecast the future. For example, website visitors are often used as a leading indicator of future sales. The more visitors, the more estimated sales. Lagging indicators, on the other hand, are retrospective measures.

Revenue, for example, is a lagging indicator, since it's a measure of customer behavior that has already occurred (through customers' buying something). It usually doesn't help predict or forecast what will likely occur in the future.

## 3. Build a dashboard.

It's one thing to create KPIs, it's another to use them on an everyday basis to get results. Without a dashboard that keeps your team's KPIs front and center, it's easy to veer off track. The best KPI dashboards provide real-time, visual status summaries of the most important KPIs, all in one place. Sure, creating a dashboard is a start, but it's useless unless you use it with your team.

The best approach is to create a dashboard with your team, agree on who will update the data and how frequently, and then review the dashboard on a regular basis (daily, weekly, or monthly, etc.).

I also suggest mapping out your KPIs using a template. The company I co-founded, upBoard, has a [template](#) that's useful for building out a set of KPIs. You can modify it to suit your team's needs—for example, adjust the

time frame or status indicators—or simply create your own.

KPIs are just like anything else: garbage in, garbage out. That's why it's important to take the time to step back, look at what you're really trying to achieve, and then determine how best to measure it. KPIs have the ability to align teams, motivate, and push performance to new levels. The real power of KPIs lies in using them as a business process, not just as a static tool.

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## About the Author

Soren Kaplan is the author of two bestselling and award-winning books, *Leapfrogging* and *The Invisible Advantage*. He is a former corporate executive, an affiliated professor at USC's Center for Effective Organizations, and the Founder of [InnovationPoint](#) and [upBOARD](#).

Recognized by the Thinkers50 as one of the world's thought leaders in disruptive innovation, new business models, and innovation culture, he works with Disney, NBCUniversal, Kimberly-Clark, Colgate-Palmolive, Hershey, Red Bull, Medtronic, Roche, Philips, Cisco, Visa, Ascension Health, Kaiser Permanente, CSAA Insurance Group, American Council on Exercise, and numerous other organizations.

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Tom Koulopoulos

# A piece of trash with four simple words changed my life and maybe yours too



While there may be no one secret to living a meaningful life, this simple piece of advice definitely holds the key to unlocking some of life's secrets.

I must tell you at the outset that I am an avowed disbeliever when it comes to people professing that they have found the secret to living a full life. Partly because it's entirely valid that each of us has a separate set of goals, aspirations, ambitions, and values that make life worth living. And, over time, even these may change for you as you encounter the inevitable course corrections brought on by all of those things life serves up without your having asked for them.

So, what I am about to suggest is not a prescription for how to live your life. That's something you alone own and have the responsibility for figuring out. What I am going to share is something that may help you on that journey. It has been my mantra for the past five years, and I attribute much of my own happiness, joy, and ability to live in the present to following it.

Be forewarned that there will be an ask of you, at the end of this column, but it's going to be a simple one. I won't promise it will change your life or make your journey as an entrepreneur easier, but I will confess that it has done

both for me. First some background.

## Street Sense

I came across this wisdom in the same way that we find so many of life's most profound lessons, through a fair bit of heartache, a good dose of pain, and a pinch of serendipity. In the period of a few months in 2011, my mother passed away, my wife and I filed for divorce, a business venture I'd invested heavily in hit rock bottom, and I cut my speaking and writing to a fraction of what was typical in order to be a stay-at-home dad for my two kids. It was one of the darkest and most difficult periods of my life. Yet, it was here that I discovered a small, but profound, break in the clouds that led me through it.

*"I caught a glimpse of a tiny wrinkled piece of paper. Not something I typically would have paid any attention to, but there was something written on it and my curiosity was piqued."*

I can't recall exactly where I was or why I was there, but even if I could I don't believe it's relevant to what comes next. I was taking a midday walk, and as I glanced down to step off the curb and cross the street I caught a glimpse of a tiny wrinkled piece of paper. Not something worthy of a second glance, but there was something written on it and my curiosity was piqued. I picked it up and unfolded it.

On one side of it was a short prayer to Saint Jude. On the other were four scribbled words stacked one on top of the other:

1. Acceptance
2. Forgiveness
3. Tolerance
4. Gratitude

I could contrive a wonderful narrative about how that piece of paper got there, why it came across my path, how it found me rather than my finding it, and how the universe manifests our intentions in automagical ways. I'm calling BS on all of that. It just doesn't matter. The universe isn't an Apple Watch, tracking my GPS coordinates and delivering up scraps of paper in my path like Siri reminders. I'm not going to go down that path.

Truth is, I'd expect something a bit more dramatic from a universe that also regularly produces supernovas and sucks galaxies to their death through black holes. It was a scrap of discarded paper. Period.

What is relevant is how I interpreted those four words. That's what has stuck with me and that's what's worth sharing.

## Acceptance

As an entrepreneur, you want to control everything. I get it. Been there, done that. I'm not naive enough to suggest that you cede control to fate and serendipity. But there will be many things that

you cannot control: the market, customers, employees, investors, to name just a few. However, the worst thing you can do is ignore these because they are not telling you what you want to hear.

In my own case, when I came across that piece of paper, I was refusing to accept that what was happening to me could teach me anything. By shutting out what I felt was the distracting noise in my life, I was also blocking out the lessons to be learned from it. As when a car's engine is making all sorts of strange sounds, you can choose to turn up the radio to drown the engine out or pay attention and get the damn thing fixed.

Acceptance isn't about sitting back and letting things happen with fingers crossed. It's listening carefully to the messages you don't want to hear and growing, adjusting course, and pivoting from the lessons they have to teach.

### **Forgiveness**

When bad things happen, the reflex response for most of us is to ascribe blame to someone or something. After all, if we find the cause we can remove it and get back to normal. At the very least, we can find satisfaction in directing our anger and frustration at whatever or whoever is to blame. While there's clearly merit in removing bad actors and flawed processes that are creating problems, there's no benefit to carrying the burden of blame beyond that point.

Yet, all too often, we focus on blame long after it serves any useful purpose. Have you ever caught yourself saying, "If it wasn't for X, I would have been so much better off" or "If X hadn't happened, I'd be happier/more successful/ wealthier."

Carrying that burden is like the aftershock of an earthquake. Whatever damage was done by the main event is now compounded by the burden of keeping the memory of it front and center. Forgiveness isn't absolution. It's letting go so you can move on.

### **Tolerance**

This is one of the most critical aspects of success. It's the ability to not only accept the necessary course corrections in life and business, but to actually embrace them. Yeah, that's a tough one, because it's never what you had planned for. What can I say. Welcome to life.

When I think back on virtually every significant event in my life, I have to admit that although I may have had a certain goal in mind, the steps and the path that led me there were far more circuitous and littered with serendipity (the scrap of paper being a prime example) than anything I could ever have planned for.

Whether it's encountering someone whose perspective is radically different from your own, or a bend in the road that veers you wildly off course, having the fortitude to tolerate, and ultimately embrace, the unplanned and unexpected is as much a part of success as anything else. Case in point, how well are you tolerating the mere proposition of what I just said?

### **Gratitude**

Foremost among the things that contribute to our quality of life, our happiness, and our ability to genuinely live in the present is our acknowledgement of those things that we have to be grateful for. Nothing is harder when you are in the darkest corners of your life, and yet, in those moments, nothing is more important. I've written about this often, because it is such a recurring theme in the experiences I've had and that I've witnessed in others who have had to struggle with the unfairness of life.

I've travelled the world since I was a toddler. I've seen people who had absolutely no apparent reason to be grateful who were much happier than people who seemed to have everything. A good friend of mine, Chris Palmore, who I wrote an earlier column about, founded a non-profit many years ago dedicated to raising the awareness of gratitude's importance. I recall traveling with him in NYC for a

weekend while he interviewed the homeless. He'd ask them what they were grateful for. Each person was quick to list the simple things in their life that they were grateful for.

When life gets hard, we want to believe that there's nothing to be grateful for. It serves some sort of perverse need to wallow in our misery. I don't care how hard or dark life is, if you take the time to notice there are always things to be grateful for. If you cannot come up with anything, I'll give you one. You're here now, alive, reading this. There are 150,000 fewer people on the planet who didn't wake up today and never will. Gratitude comes from acknowledging the gift of each day.

### **Conclusion**

So, there you have it. But wait: That's just half of it. The rest is a question I'd like you to think about and the ask I promised at the start of this column.

As you read through that list, did you think only of how you could accept, forgive, tolerate, and be grateful for other people, things, or events? Because here's the real revelation. Rather than just focus on applying these to the outside, how about also applying them to yourself?

Rather than beat yourself up over whatever isn't going your way and how you're to blame, what if you accepted, forgave, tolerated, and were grateful for who you are, right now, in this moment—flaws, missteps, failings, screwups, and accomplishments—all of it? Because here's what I know as fact. The rest of the world isn't guaranteed to do any of that for you. In fact, it's more likely that it will consistently do the opposite.

If there is a "secret" to this journey we are all on, then applying these lessons to how we think about ourselves may be as close as we get to finding a key to unlocking its core. Besides, until you focus each of the four things onto yourself it's unlikely that you'll be able to project any of them onto others. If you're a leader, or aspiring to be one, pay

close attention to that last point. It will be the crucible of your leadership metal.

Lastly, I promised an ask at the end of this column. Here it is. For the next week, try a simple exercise. Make a commitment to start and end every day by keeping a journal of, or by reciting, these four words—acceptance, forgiveness, tolerance, and gratitude. List, after each one, those things that fall under the word. Everyday add at least one new thing to the list for each of the four words.

Simple, right? Will it change your life? Only you can answer that. So, go ahead, pick up the scrap of wisdom, give it a week, and then tell me.

This article originally appeared on Innovation Excellence:

[www.innovationexcellence.com/blog/2019/12/03/a-piece-of-trash-with-four-simple-words-changed-my-life-and-maybe-yours-too](http://www.innovationexcellence.com/blog/2019/12/03/a-piece-of-trash-with-four-simple-words-changed-my-life-and-maybe-yours-too)

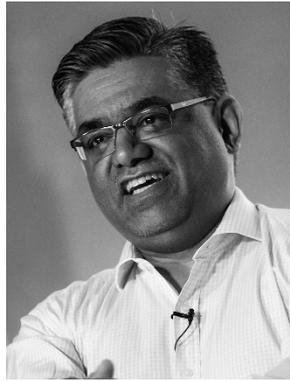
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Tom Koulopoulos is the author of 13 books and founder of the **Delphi Group**, a 30-year-old Boston-based think tank and a past Inc. 500 company that focuses on innovation and the future of business.

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Sunil Bali

## Space, the final frontier.....

Martina Navratilova was once asked, "How do you maintain your focus and manage to keep playing professional tennis at the age of 43"?

She replied, "The ball doesn't know how old I am. Besides, for 90% of the match I don't have to focus".

In a typical tennis match, the players spend less than 15% of their time hitting the ball. During a round of golf, golfers spend less than 20% of their round swinging a golf club, and in American football, the ball is actually in play for only 6% of the game!

In his excellent book *Stillpower*, leading sports psychologist Garret Kramer says that a key factor to performing well in sport and in life, is your ability to control the quality and quantity of your internal dialogue, given that: *Performance = potential – internal interference*

In short, you need to stop yourself from stopping yourself.

Sport, business and life, it would appear, are all played on a six inch course..... the space between our ears.

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### About the Author

Sunil is a Performance Coach, Speaker and Author.

Ex Head of Talent for Vodafone Group and Santander, and having run a £50m business, Sunil has been responsible for hiring over 50000 people and has had the pleasure of working with some great entrepreneurs, professionals and leaders.

### Moving minds - Transforming performance

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what the hell is that ?



oh, just my mind

Janet Sernack

# Leading and managing human transitions through adversity



Connecting with a diverse range of my coaching and consulting clients over the past few weeks, has seriously deepened my understanding of the impact of disruption and adversity, on our stress levels and neurology, and the importance of leading and managing these factors, from both the business and the human perspective. It reaffirms the importance of leaders and managers becoming more generous, tolerant, caring, empathic, and resilient not only with themselves, and also with others, by strategically leading and managing both the business and human transitions to a post Covid-19 world. **Taking both a business and a human perspective.**

Because so many leaders and managers have been emotionally hijacked by the often-dire consequences of their own particular series of downturns and stress levels, they often fail to realize that they have a crucial role in empathizing and supporting their people and teams to transition safely and effectively, from the pre Covid-19 world to what could become an abundant, adaptive, innovative and sustainable post Covid-19 world. **By failing to focus the human aspects of transitioning from the old to the new, they are unable to help people**

**see, acknowledge, own, and deal with the amount of disruption, dis-regulation and potentially damaging increased levels of individual and collective stress.** Not doing so, will result in a range of reactive human responses – *“where everything has changed, but nothing is different”*.

#### **Mindset matters most**

Whether you are a self-employed individual, team, or organisation, the range of current adverse global problems and economic conditions, have created a perfect and stressful storm. Where according to a recent, well-researched article in the [New York Times](#) by Kari Leibowitz and Alia Crum: *“We can actually use that stress to improve our health and well-being. Over a decade of research — ours and that of others — suggests that it’s not the type or amount of stress that determines its impact. Instead, it’s our mindset about stress that matters most”*. This means that we are able to individually and collectively, **manage and shift our mindsets**, be intentionally positive and caring in supporting and enabling ourselves and others we interact with, to lead and manage the human transition effectively and systemically to co-create what might be a post Covid-19 world.

#### **Planning human transitions**

Planning your own and your teams’ transition astutely, starts

with taking a very first step in helping them make sense and connect with their worlds right now. Doing this by letting go of assumptions and withholding judgement, and then helping them understand how disruption and adversity impact peoples’ individual and collective safety, survival, and security needs. Noticing and hearing people’s reactive responses, helps them regulate their stress arousal, and potentially creates the safe “allow space” for enabling people to develop better tolerance to stress. This creates an opening for actually using that stress to improve our health and well-being and ultimately becoming more adaptive and resilient in the face of it.

#### **We have the power to change our stress mindsets.**

Being generous, tolerant, adaptive, and resilient, in the face of disruption and adversity creates cracks, openings, and thresholds for inquisitiveness, curiosity, wonder and amazement about the possibilities’ that could emerge through today’s perfect and stressful storm. Leading and managing transitions as a transformation point, for collaborating to build successful and sustainable individual and collective futures, potentially affects some of the deep systemic changes organisations and the world needs right now.

**The three phases of human transitions.** I had first-hand experience and moment of truth of this when, almost ten years ago, we relocated to the Middle East, from Australia to an environment in a constant state of disruption and adversity, anxiety and stress, which I found deeply confronting and enormously challenging. I learned that for transitions to be successful, they typically have three phases:

1. First, I quickly realised that I had two choices, I could either avoid facing my new reality, by applying my reality distortion filters and sustain my old lens, mindsets, attitudes, and behaviours that suited my old safe situation in Sydney. That collude with my old Compass Learning normal and my old ways and business as usual habits, as a way of coping with the intrusive new culture. Yet, if I was going to succeed, and even flourish in such a radically different, competitive, survival-based culture, I could choose to let go of the “old” to see and embrace my new world with “fresh” eyes. To bravely focus on creating cracks, openings, and thresholds to stimulate inquisitiveness, curiosity, wonder, and amazement about the possibilities that could emerge from that perfect and stressful storm.
2. Secondly, having operated as a trainer and facilitator, I knew that I had to become compassionate, courageous, and creative if I was going to successfully acknowledge, own and deal with the neurological and psychological “no man’s land” between my old world and the new world that was emerging. Letting go of my old roles and learning to become a coach, and to understand and regulate the impact of my survival brain, and the chasm that exists between it and our thinking brains.
3. Thirdly, choosing to begin anew, I learned to become adaptive and resilient through embracing a new paradox lens, by working with both the

constraints of my new environment and with focussing on what might or could be possible to create, invent and innovate, within it.

Learning, through necessity, to **adapt, learn and grow through uncertainty**, by embracing a range of resourceful growth and innovative mindsets, attitudes, and behaviours that supported my new situation, and ultimately enabled me to **ride the wave of disruptive change**. **Leading and managing human transitions** Leading and managing transitions, in the face of disruption and adversity, requires more than the obligatory change management strategy and team.

There is so much happening right now that we can’t control, yet there are also unprecedented possibilities and opportunities amid the fear. According to the New York Times article **“In Stressful Times, Make Stress Work for You”**: *“Some psychologists argue that true transformative change can occur only during stress or crises. The trick is to channel your coronavirus stress as energy to make the most of this time”*.

**Being a transitional leader and manager.** To be effective as a transitional leader or manager, make sure to take, enact and embody, **both** a well-considered, generous, kind and caring, **and** an orchestrated strategic and systemic effort. Being deep empathic, ensuring effective communication, offering training, supporting people through individual and team coaching, and offering counselling if required, and monitoring and validating people’s progress, individually and collectively. Leaders and managers need to bravely role model being adaptive, generous, creative, courageous, compassionate and collaborative, in ways that generously and kindly embrace transition-wise care. Supported by well-considered, inclusive decisions, supported by a good sense of timing, so that people feel safe enough to take the small steps towards increasing their stress-tolerance and resilience to ongoing disruption and

adversity. *“The virus and our response to it are incredibly complex. But later, we will be able to ask ourselves how we each responded to this crisis. Did we live in accordance with our values? Did we make the most of this opportunity to learn and grow personally, to connect with loved ones, and to prepare for the next time we face a crisis?”* This is the first monthly blog in a series of three blogs, themed of Leading and Managing Human Transitions through Disruption and Adversity.

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### About the Author

Janet is the Founder, CEO & Chief Katalyst of ImagineNation™ a generative and provocative global enterprise innovation consulting, education and coaching company that enables people to be, think and act differently. She has 29 years of experience consulting and leading culture development, change management, leadership and innovation education programs to some of Australasia’s and Israel’s top 100 companies in the retail, service, IT, telecommunications, financial services, building and manufacturing sectors.

Prior to launching her consulting, training and coaching career she was Marketing Development Manager for the 42 Grace Bros’ department stores, which are now, part of the Myer Group. She then launched Australia’s first design management consultancy and worked with some of the world’s leading fashion and lifestyle brands including Orotan, Chanel and Seafolly.

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Marcel Schwantes

# 4 Ways to build a learning culture while your workforce is remote

## Mandating a three-hour webinar training is no longer going to cut it

As **business leaders** and individuals grapple with the staggering impact of **Covid-19**, one thing has become undoubtedly clear. In order for leaders to foster organizational resilience and weather the post-pandemic storm, they must prioritize the learning and development of their workforce.

I don't mean mandated **Zoom presentations** in which employees multitask on the side. What I mean is flexible, passion-driven learning where employees learn what they want, when they want, and on their own terms.

Shelley Osborne, VP of learning at Udemy, offers a much-needed revision to corporate training in her new book, *The Upskilling Imperative: 5 Ways to Make Learning Core to the Way We Work*. In it, Osborne challenges traditional, one-size-fits-all approaches to training that are no longer relevant to modern workers—let alone those working remotely.

Shelley recommends the following to help leaders develop an effective and sustainable learning culture—with an eye toward continuous employee growth and long-term business success during (and beyond) Covid-19.

### 1. Demonstrate how learning drives business success

"When beginning to build their learning culture, leaders must consider that employees need to understand how their learning impacts business outcomes," says Osborne.

As businesses continue to operate with limited staff or reduced capacity, it's critical for employees to stretch their skill sets further

and fill tasks and roles they wouldn't normally. Individuals are more likely to learn and seek out learning when they understand the role it plays in overall business success.

"Leaders can signal the value of learning throughout the organization by setting aside their own time for it and sharing with their teams and the broader organization what they're learning," she says. "This makes it clear to employees that learning at work is not only accepted, it's encouraged."

### 2. Let your employees define flexibility for continuous improvement

Harnessing the power of learning isn't as simple as rolling out more training modules or sending people to a slew of workshops.

Employees require more flexibility today than ever before, and that is especially true when it comes to learning. Because of Covid-19, parents are working double duty as busy professionals and homeschool teachers, while other employees navigate the nuances of working remotely with roommates. Bottom line: Mandating a three-hour webinar training is no longer going to cut it.

Building a sustainable learning culture means giving employees time and space to learn where and when they want. Doing so will encourage them to seek out new learning opportunities independently and allow for psychological safety and the ability to learn.

"One of the greatest leadership lessons I've learned is that we must recognize we aren't perfect and there is always room to learn and grow," says Osborne. "When you have teams and businesses that provide flexibility for growth and development, we can all continuously improve."

### 3. Focus on change agility

We need to do more to lay the groundwork for unexpected change. However, this preparedness can't be exclusive to pandemics and recessions. We must understand and accept that change is constant, necessary, and beneficial for surviving and thriving in today's workplace.

Osborne refers to this type of adaptability as "change agility"—seeing change as an ongoing opportunity, not as a threat or liability. And at the center of change agility is continuous learning.

"Grounding a company's culture in learning is the surest way to navigate through change," says Osborne. "A strong learning culture empowers employees to upskill themselves in the face of change, continually grow, and adapt to new challenges."

### 4. Continuous learning and Covid-19

If there is one message Osborne would like readers to take away from her book, it's that learning programs must evolve with the times. Traditional approaches to training (à la overhead projector and chalkboards) were built for a world we don't live in anymore. What's more, they aren't engaging for today's workers, who are accustomed to consuming digital

content on their own terms. This was true before the pandemic and it's undeniable now.

Beyond modernizing the learning experience at work, companies need to transform at every level into learning-driven organizations, where working and learning are inextricably linked.

As companies continue to navigate this new environment, Osborne is optimistic that the fundamental shift toward flexible, accessible online learning is here to stay.

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#### About the Author:

Marcel is a speaker, entrepreneur, columnist, and Board Certified Coach with 20 years' experience in leadership development. Marcel is passionate about working with forward-thinking leaders intentional about the empowerment of people to create extraordinary impact. His work has been featured on Inc., Time, Yahoo!, Business Insider, Thrive Global, Chicago Tribune, and Denver Post. He holds degrees in Communications (B.A.) and Organizational Behavior (M.A.).

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Dimis Michaelides

## Politicians and Bureaucrats – Friends or Foes of Innovation?

Politicians and bureaucrats are condemned to co-exist with each other and with the other pivots of entrepreneurship: businessmen. Sweet or toxic their symbiosis is necessary, as they are both key players in the innovation game.

A private company in a capitalist system will innovate by starting up a new enterprise, or by improving its products and services, or by launching new products and services, or by extending its markets, or by reducing its cost base, or by changing its business model, strategy and structure. In competitive systems, private companies are learning to adapt to faster change because the alternative is to wither and die.

Government has many roles in innovation. First, a direct role in innovation through public institutions such as universities and research centers.

Government can undertake fundamental research which has large costs and few immediate commercial benefits like the large Hadron collider, space travel and renewable energy. Or it can subsidize such research or promising areas. Mariana Mazzucato, a public innovation expert, has shown how 6 of the 8 most important features of the first smartphone (Apple's i-phone) were generated by government or with public funds.

Second, government is an essential part of the ecosystem for innovation. Government is fundamental in providing a framework for innovation, including legislation and regulation

on issues of public interest such as personal privacy and genetic engineering.

Third, government has a duty to offer citizens the highest possible quality of service at the best possible cost. The public sector in many countries has innovated extensively in the areas of health, education, defence, tax collection, public transport, managing public spaces, and so much more. Many things are far better accomplished online than in long lines.

Fourth, many brilliant examples of social innovation, targeting specific groups and not-for-profit are spearheaded by local or national governments.

Unlike private firms government does not wither and die. Neither do politicians and public servants. The question do they address innovation actively or passively or not at all? Countries where the public sector is open to innovation and change have proven to be worthy of their citizens' trust and have boosted their economies too.

Worthy business persons, politicians and bureaucrats are forward-looking and envision the tremendous benefits of progressive change as well as the risks involved. Their appetite for change and risk, however are not the same.

Business people have learnt they must change at least as fast as their competitors and those disruptive upstarts, those who are changing the rules their industries. Whilst they too face resistance to change, they are also more ready

and able to overcome this resistance. As they go through one round of change they brace for another and they make change part of the life of their organizations. Otherwise they shall perish.

Public servants are more change-averse. They are less likely to lose their jobs because they are often both unionised, 100% secure in their jobs, without meritocratic performance management and mindsets firmly stuck in the past. They do not easily welcome deep, innovative.

Politicians of the vote-mongering type will bend to the wishes of change-averse people, especially if they come from powerful constituencies, such as the civil service. And in every change of government new people are quick to denounce whatever their predecessors have achieved or not.

Visionary public servants and politicians exist, but quite often they do not confront change with the urgency of private companies. Are they friends or foes of innovation?

In the worst of cases they make common cause with anti-change agents in business and cultivate stagnation. Through inaction and even hostility they can completely thwart progress. In the best cases they play an active role in the game. Ignoring or impeding innovation is of course very unpatriotic as their country's competitiveness is bound to be damaged.

China and the US have forged different ways of making the politician-businessperson-bureaucrat collaboration work on innovation, Europe less so, though there inter-country differences are quite marked. The best outcomes come when all three constituencies are resolutely focussed on change, with full recognition of its risks and how to deal with the winners and losers from every act of innovation.

Markets are powerful mechanisms for innovation, so are governments. Companies are powerful innovators, so are civil

services. To promote innovation their symbiosis must be strong and fruitful.

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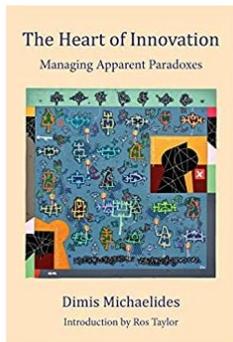
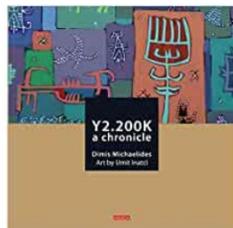
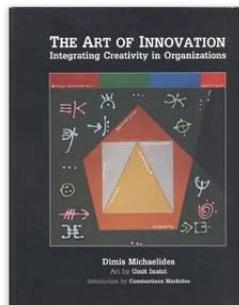
Dimis Michaelides, keynote speaker and author on innovation, creativity and leadership. Dimis has extensive international experience as a business executive and as a speaker in corporate and public events. He also offers workshops and change management consulting for private businesses, NGOs and public organizations.

Experiences with Dimis are out-of-the-ordinary, designed to have a lasting and practical impact. He blends subject-matter expertise with individual client needs, participants' energy and... a touch of magic!

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Michael Graber

## Secrets of a successful serial Intrapreneur - Paul Campbell: Chief Innovation Officer, W.L. Gore & Associates

A Keynote presentation from the Back End of Innovation Conference.

The first slide gave away the four secrets in brief form:

- Ideation
- Deconstruct
- Incubate
- Scale up

Paul began his talk with a metaphor, the new Salesforce building—a new type of structure that is unprecedented in earthquake zones because it was so safe. He claims companies need to re-think their current business model and processes in like fashion.

Deconstruction: select dismantling of certain components.

“The question is where to destruct and reconstruct to get the most impact in your organization:

- HR
- Supply Chain
- Go-to-market patterns
- Suppliers
- Finance
- Governance

Look at how many functions needed to be addressed to be effective,” he adds. “Each department has gold and platinum rules—platinum rules need board approval for change, but we got it and you can too.”

Advice: “You can use the Business Model Canvas and mark where the traditional approach still works and where you need reconstruction to be an effective innovator,” says Paul.

“Here’s what I learned at one company: 75% of projects were cancelled within six months of transferring to core business from the innovation group. So, we incubated the businesses to where they were generating real revenue. This accelerator helped us de-risk the concepts before handing them off to the core business. You have to validate the business model before sending over the transom.”

Having a place where you can protect and incubate these concepts is key.

An energy company had “a great strategy and great culture but had grown only through acquisition. They couldn’t incubate businesses inside the company,” he says. Using a mix of Innovation Methods and Lean Innovation (Design Thinking and Lean Innovation Training Program) and had good successes.

At Gore “we realized we needed partnership with start-ups to get new materials in and also to give these start-ups our materials.”

Gore was founded in 1958 and is privately held. Goretex is used for outdoor wear, military, and first responders. They also have an industrial division and Elixir guitar strings. “Lastly we have a medical products division, including cardiac implants.”

One of the things that has made Gore “is a unique culture that empowers employees to follow their passion—this is how Elixir strings were born. It created a fantastic culture for ideation, but our challenge is turning the ideas into good businesses.”

The best funding model for innovation “is a Venture Model—have a set aside budget, but you can treat it like an ATM. You have to start adding 0000s to your request when in market, factors of 10 or 100—if you can get the CFO and CEO to set aside a slush fund,” he says. “The money doesn’t live in the P&L of the innovation department. If you treat it like a budget you have to spend it rather than just being called upon.”

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### About the Author

Michael is Co-Founder and Managing Partner at Southern Growth Studio. Michael leads the qualitative team with a particular focus on innovation, to deliver high-impact go-to-market strategies and product launches.

Michael has more than twenty years of experience leading marketing and innovation efforts.

A published poet and musician, Michael is the creative force that compliments the analytical side of the house. Michael speaks and publishes frequently on best practices in marketing, business strategy, and innovation.

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Greg Satell

## The Eureka moment myth

In 1928, Alexander Fleming arrived at his lab to find that a mysterious mould had contaminated his Petri dishes and was eradicating the bacteria colonies he was trying to grow. Intrigued, he decided to study the mould. That's how Fleming came to be known as the discoverer of penicillin.

Fleming's story is one that is told and retold because it reinforces so much about what we love about innovation. A brilliant mind meets a pivotal moment of epiphany and—*Eureka!*—the world is forever changed. Unfortunately, that's not really how things work. It wasn't true in Fleming's case and it won't work for you.

The truth is that innovation is never a single event, but a process of discovery, engineering and transformation, which is why penicillin didn't become commercially available until 1945 (and the drug was actually a different strain of the mould than Fleming had discovered). We need to stop searching for Eureka moments and get busy with the real work of innovating.

### **Learning To Recognize And Define Problems**

Before Fleming, there was Ignaz Semmelweis and to understand Fleming's story it helps to understand that of his predecessor. Much like Fleming, Semmelweis was a bright young man of science who had a moment of epiphany. In Semmelweis's case, he was one of the first to realize that infections could spread from doctor to patient.

That simple insight led him to institute a strict regime of hand washing at Vienna General Hospital. Almost immediately, the incidence of deadly childbed fever dropped precipitously. Yet his ideas were not accepted at the time and Semmelweis didn't do himself any favours by refusing to format his data properly or to work collaboratively to build support for his ideas. Instead, he angrily railed against the medical establishment he saw as undermining his work.

Semmelweis would die in an insane asylum, ironically from an infection he contracted under care, and never got to see the germ theory of disease emerge from the work of people like Louis Pasteur and Robert Koch. That's what led to the study of bacteriology, sepsis and Alexander Fleming growing those cultures that were contaminated by the mysterious mould.

When Fleming walked into his lab on that morning in 1928, he was bringing a wealth of experiences to the problem. During World War I, he had witnessed many soldiers die from sepsis and how applying antiseptic agents to the wound often made the problem worse. Later, he found that nasal secretions inhibited bacterial growth.

So, when the chance discovery of penicillin happened, it was far from a single moment, but rather a "happy accident" that he had spent years preparing for.

### **Combining Domains**

Today, we remember Fleming's discovery of penicillin as a historic breakthrough, but it wasn't considered to be so at the time. In fact, when it was first published

in the *British Journal of Experimental Pathology*, nobody really noticed. The truth is that what Fleming discovered couldn't have cured anybody. It was just a mould secretion that killed bacteria in a Petri dish.

Perhaps even more importantly, Fleming was ill-equipped to transform penicillin into something useful. He was a pathologist that largely worked alone. To transform his discovery into an actual cure, he would need chemists and other scientists, as well as experts in fermentation, manufacturing, logistics and many other things. To go from millilitres in the lab to metric tons in the real world is no trivial thing.

So Fleming's paper lay buried in a scientific journal for ten years before it was rediscovered by a team led by Howard Florey and Ernst Chain at the University of Oxford. Chain, a world-class biochemist, was able to stabilize the penicillin compound and another member of the team, Norman Heatley, developed a fermentation process to produce it in greater quantities.

Because Florey and Chain led a larger team in a bigger lab they were also had the staff and equipment to perform experiments on mice, which showed that penicillin was effective in treating infections. However, when they tried to cure a human, they found that they were not able to produce enough of the drug. They simply didn't have the capacity.

### **Driving A Transformation**

By the time Florey and Chain had established the potential of penicillin it was already 1941 and England was at war, which made it

difficult to find funding to scale up their work. Luckily, Florey had done a Rhodes Scholarship in the United States and was able to secure a grant to travel to America and continue the development of penicillin with US-based labs.

That collaboration produced two more important breakthroughs. First, they were able to identify a more powerful strain of the penicillin mould. Second, they developed a fermentation process utilizing corn steep liquor as a medium. Corn steep liquor was common in the American Midwest, but virtually un-heard of back in England.

Still, they needed to figure out a way to scale up production and that was far beyond the abilities of research scientists. However, the OSRD, a government agency in charge of wartime research, understood the potential of penicillin for the war effort and initiated an aggressive program, involving two dozen pharmaceutical companies, to overcome the challenges.

Working feverishly, they were able to produce enough penicillin to deploy the drug for D-Day in 1944 and saved untold thousands of lives. After the war was over, in 1945, penicillin was made commercially available, which touched off a "golden age" of antibiotic research and new drugs were discovered almost every year between 1950 and 1970.

### **Innovation Is Never A Single Event**

The story of Fleming's *Eureka!* moment is romantic and inspiring, but also incredibly misleading. It wasn't one person and one moment that changed the world, but the work of many over decades that made an impact. As I explain in my book, *Cascades*, it is small groups, loosely connected, but united by a shared purpose that drive transformational change.

In fact, the development of penicillin involved not one, but a series of epiphanies. First, Fleming discovered penicillin. Then, Florey and Chain rediscovered Fleming's

work. Chain stabilized the compound, Heatley developed the fermentation process, other scientists identified the more powerful strain and corn steep liquor as a fermentation medium. Surely, there were many other breakthroughs involving production, logistics and treatment that are lost to history.

This is not the exception, but the rule. The truth is that the next big thing always starts out looking like nothing at all. For example, Jim Allison, who recently won the Nobel Prize for his development of cancer immunotherapy, had his idea rejected by pharmaceutical companies, much like the medical establishment dismissed Semmelweis back in the 1850s.

Yet Allison kept at it. He continued to pound the pavement, connect and collaborate with others and that's why today he is hailed as a pioneer and a hero. That's why we need to focus less on inventions and more on ecosystems. It's never a single moment of *Eureka!* that truly changes the world, but many of them.

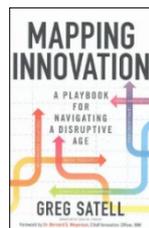
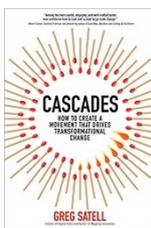
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### **About the Author**

Greg Satell is an international keynote speaker, adviser and bestselling author of *Cascades: How to Create a Movement that Drives Transformational Change*. His previous effort, *Mapping Innovation*, was selected as one of the best business books of 2017.

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## NHS COVID-19 app: How to download and use coronavirus tracker and why it's important

People living in England and Wales are being encouraged to download and install the NHS COVID-19 app on to their smartphones to help fight coronavirus.

The NHS COVID-19 app is the fastest way to protect the ones you love, and keep your friends and family safe from the killer virus.

The app is so simple to use, and it is incredibly effective.

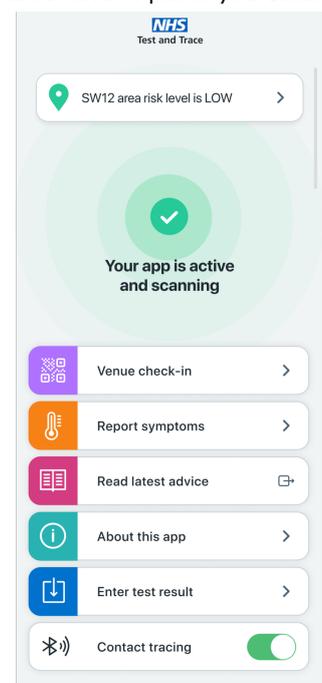
If you have symptoms, you can check these with the app to see if they might suggest you have coronavirus, based on the latest government guidance. The app will then guide you to booking a test online. If you receive a positive result, you can tell the app, and it will send an anonymous notification to any app user who you've come into recent close contact with.

The app lets you know anonymously if you have been in close contact with someone who has coronavirus, so you can take the right action to protect the ones you love, stopping further spread of the virus.

It shows you the risk level in your local area, based on the postcode you enter when you download it.

It gives you advice on what action to take, so you can know how best to protect the ones you love.

You'll start seeing official NHS QR code posters in local businesses, and the app's inbuilt QR scanner is the quickest and easiest way to now check-in, without having to fill out forms or pass on your details.



All information and guidelines are found on <https://covid19.nhs.uk/>





Adam Malofsky

# Innovation is a lifestyle, not a bunch of metrics

Far too many supposed innovation experts believe that measuring activities is critical to success. Maybe. Maybe not so much. At least for the big stuff. Innovation activities simply for the sake of doing something without context and insight from the measure may be in fact very misleading.

Persistent growth, profit, ROI and NPV are the obvious measures, really the only ones that count, but we had better all be measuring that anyway. The measures noted above are in fact not necessarily appropriate at all. It's not about types of innovation or measuring activities, meetings and ideas. Instead, I see innovation as a lifestyle. If you're not doing it 100% of the time, as a part of your body and soul, it's hard to be truly innovative. You simply don't turn your mind off.

Accordingly, my preference centers upon context for measures and to see innovation as more of an approach, a general attitude and methodology than a series of specific steps, training and subsequent measures. Again, the measures sommay discuss, even the zillion types of innovation, just don't make sense to me as many have no context and thus proof that they add insight. Innovation indeed is not a program, a 12 steps to success. It's a lifestyle, an inherent attitude and capability rarely taught but often revealed.

By example, in my experience with transformative innovation, corporate or startup, after an organization, a group becomes more innovative, expenditures on product development and the like actually decrease, the number of projects decrease and the return on invested capital, margins and customer profitability (b2b) or lifestyle (b2c) radically increase.

The noted measures by too many look instead at increases in activities and the population engaged which is misleading. In fact, the implication that a certain % of time is being spent on innovation for example implies that the staff is not innovating the other times! Really? An innovative organization focused on all activities as being an opportunity to engage, observe, learn, experiment, analyze and ideate innovates does this 100% of the time. Telling people to devote 10% of their time to innovation is like planning exactly when you will get married, get promoted and hit the big time. Life, innovation simply does not work that way.

Innovation is seeing, observing things in new ways with an accumulation of highly varied experiences that seemingly culminate in that "sudden" (really not so sudden) epiphany. **Steve Johnson** and others work here is remarkable. Look at Darwin – many see that his innovations took shape in his notes decades before his seminal work. He just was not ready in his mind to put it all together. Think about how many times our final realizations are culminations of a long period of mental thought, observation experimentation. It's why we say research – not search.

Measuring ideas? How many ideas we generate? Lots are great?

Really? Too many ideas are a bad thing in our view. How about instead the number of ideas killed and the why? In fact, that may be a measure of ineffective ideation, as a group with a laser focus upon global socio-demographic, geo-political, industrial and environmental trends within the context of what they are trying to do for their customers would imply that the number of ideas should decrease per unit time but be ever increasing in their value to the latter customers.

The number of engineers, scientists and technicians employed does not at all directly correlate to being innovative or effective either. How

many tiny upstarts with 1 to 100 employees total have knocked off a behemoth? It's their revenue generated per staffer, the new product revenue generated per staffer and group that matters.

In other words, context.

Accordingly, maybe the right metrics are really centered upon new product introduction rates, success rates, improved customer, and their customer, profitability and lifestyle satisfaction measured against the size of investment and organization and the accomplishments per unit time. In other words, the standard stuff along with a measure of improved performance and it's trajectory, in the proper relevant contexts.

Innovation is not a program.

It's a life-long enterprise.

It's an attitude.

It's a lifestyle.

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## About the Author

Adam Malofsky, PhD is the Managing Director of Elemence. Adam's life focuses upon materials and manufacturing trends and opportunity identification, with subsequent evaluation, assessment and finally, where logical, venture creation through to commercialization. A 25-year veteran of the performance chemicals, polymers and materials industries, Dr. Adam Malofsky has held numerous leadership positions in a variety of start-up opportunities, both private and within corporate America.

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Paul Sloane

## The limits of positive thinking

The magical potency of positive thinking has been a common theme among motivational speakers for a long time. In 1952 Norman Vincent Peale published his seminal book, *The Power of Positive Thinking*. He advocated that you should always be optimistic. You should build a mental picture of yourself succeeding. And at the same time you should drive out negative thoughts, doubts and self-criticism. His book became a best-seller. Evangelists for positive thinking such as Anthony Robbins built on these messages. The ideas were taken to an extreme by Rhonda Byrne who claimed in her best-selling book, *The Secret*, that thinking positive thoughts was the supernatural ingredient which would guarantee success in almost any situation. It was the only thing you needed. Positive thoughts would attract success and negative thoughts would attract failure.

Unfortunately for the advocates of positivity, most of the available research shows that the power of positive thinking is greatly overrated. Gabrielle Oettingen, professor of psychology at the University of New York, has carried out extensive studies in this area. In one experiment, obese people were divided into two groups and given the objective of losing weight. One group was encouraged to think very positive thoughts about weight loss and to visualise a slimmer version of themselves. After one year the results were striking. Those people who had had the most positive thoughts had lost the least weight.

Why? The hypothesis is that visualising success can give you a feeling of satisfaction and achievement before you have properly earned it. And so, diminish the motivation to work at it. In other researches optimists who thought more positively about their retirement saved less than pessimists who were more down to earth about the future. And students who were very positive before an exam scored less well than the control group who had no illusions. Professor Oettingen says, 'The more positively people fantasize and daydream about their future success, the less well they do in terms of having actual success.'

**Gabrielle Oettingen**

She does not dismiss positive thinking. She believes that it is very useful in helping us explore different possibilities for the future. But she thinks it must be tempered with caution. An optimistic outlook is a good starting point if it is allied to a clear understanding of the difficulties that have to be faced and the work that needs to be done.

In her book, *Rethinking Positive Thinking*, she advances an approach she calls WOOP. It stands for Wish, Outcome, Obstacle, Plan. You should start by articulating your dearest wish. Then you visualise the outcome.

Next you identify the main obstacle that might prevent you from achieving your goal. Then you put in place a plan to overcome the obstacle. And finally you work your plan.

Imagine an entrepreneur who has fallen in love with his innovative idea – it is going to change the world and make him a fortune.

He can clearly see a wonderful future for the idea, the company, the customers and for himself. When he pitches his darling idea to a venture capitalist, she pours some cold water on his dreams with searching questions which expose all the impediments to success that he has overlooked or wished away. It is only if he can come up with a plan which overcomes the obstacles that she will release the investment that he needs to found the business. It is an example of WOOP in action.

So, it seems that we need a marriage of positive thinking and realism, of optimism and cold calculation. We need to be positive realists who build plans and adapt them as we work our way forward.

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### About the Author

**Paul Sloane** is an author and expert on lateral thinking in business. He has delivered hundreds of talks to executive audiences around the world. His talks are different because they challenge your thinking head-on. He is a skilled facilitator and course leader who helps top level teams achieve breakthrough results in their meetings. He helps companies overcome the problems they have making innovation happen. He can improve creativity and lateral thinking for leaders with leadership and innovation master classes. This results in a more agile culture, more ideas and successful innovation.

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Urko Wood

# Debunking myths to drive growth



Some people believe that the most innovative companies *create* customer demand with breakthrough new offerings. They say things like, “Nobody knew they needed an iPhone until **Apple** created it. **Apple** created needs that people didn’t even know they had.” Hence, if you want to be an innovation leader, strive to *create* customer needs. This may sound good, but it’s a misbelief caused by confusing *product solutions* with *customer needs*. Get this right or suffer high failure rates and missed opportunities.

**Theodore Levitt** illustrated the difference best when he said, “People don’t want to buy a ¼ inch drill; they want a ¼ inch hole!” The drill is a solution while the customer need is the job of “making a ¼ inch hole.” Customer needs are separate and distinct from product/service solutions. The breakthrough **jobs-to-be-done** (JTBD) innovation approach is based on this insight.

JTBD is a breakthrough because now, for the first time, companies can obtain a comprehensive set of customer needs in virtually any market separate and distinct from solutions. We no longer have to rely upon observational research to discover customers’ “unarticulated” needs. It turns out customers can tell us what they want if we ask them what they want to accomplish, feel and experience rather than asking them for product/service specifications.

Additionally, JTBD enables companies to identify and rank the best opportunities in the market with statistical validity. This is nirvana for any leader who wants to turn innovation and growth into a repeatable business process. It provides great confidence about where to focus and what to do to drive innovation and growth. This is consistent with **Steve Jobs** who said, “You have to start with the customer experience and work back to the technology.” It’s why skilled JTBD practitioners are delivering success rates 2-5 times higher than industry averages.

The **iPhone** did not create the need to check email, make phone calls, find information on the internet, and do a myriad of other jobs; it enabled people to do these jobs better than ever before.

The **iHealth No-Touch Forehead Thermometer** did not create needs either; it addressed the current need for testers to keep their distance from others.

**Zoom Video Conferencing** did not create demand for online meetings; they created a technology that helps us to conduct online meetings more easily.

New jobs are constantly emerging due to change such as new knowledge, new technologies, new laws and regulations, and health threats like COVID-19. COVID-19 has created dozens if not hundreds of new jobs to be done such as:

- Determine if a person is infected, which has created a demand for diagnostic tests
- Identify those with whom infected people have interacted, which has created a demand for “tracers”
- Prevent people from contracting the disease through interpersonal contact, which has created a demand for personal protective equipment (PPE)
- Prevent airborne infections inside, which has created a demand for better air filters and ventilation
- Keep surfaces clean, which has created a demand for better disinfectants and “no-touch” processes
- Sanitize items and/or surfaces that liquids might damage such as phones, car interiors, wallets and other accessories which has created a demand for UV light sanitizing wands
- Retail organizations have had to move their physical value delivery systems to online systems which have created a demand for online technologies such as Zoom, online classes, Telemedicine, e-commerce, etc.
- Etc.

Certainly, an enormous amount of operational change has been required to adjust to the current environment. In the midst of all that internal change, the companies that will thrive going forward will be those that keep their eyes on their customers’ and employees’ changing needs to help guide operational changes. Customers and employees are

relying on management to provide them with the processes, systems, and tools they need to fulfill the brand promise. That means identifying:

1. New jobs that have emerged among customers and employees and how they measure success getting those new jobs done
2. New priorities/values that are changing the way customers and employees want to get their "old" jobs done
3. How customers and employees measure success when obtaining/delivering service remotely

If you want to identify the opportunities for new value creation in your market(s) or among your employees – be it to shore up a core business, find new opportunities to exploit, or deliver an online experience that delights customers – we can help.

Reveal needs. Create value. Drive growth.

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#### About the Author:

Urko Wood founded *Reveal Growth Consultants* in 2012 to help companies turn innovation and growth into a repeatable business process. He has created a free PDF explaining how over 400 of the Fortune 1000 have done so called **Rethinking Innovation: How the Jobs-to-Be-Done Approach Delivers Dramatically Better Results.**

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Shelly Greenway

# What is an Innovation sprint and why you might need one?



Innovation Sprints are a really hot topic right now and for good reason. Some of the biggest companies in the world are using them to build the products we know and love.

If you don't know what an Innovation Sprint is, it's essentially a framework that allows you to decide on a problem, generate solutions and prototype and then test ideas with real consumers, in between 3 and 5 days. Created by Google, the framework has been a game changer for people working in the world of digital products, but now it is being widely adopted by FMCG companies who have to act and operate with far more agility than ever before.

Companies need to move faster to get viable ideas into the market ahead of the competition. Instead of taking years to develop, test, and launch a new product, companies now have months. Innovation Sprints effectively help you to cut some of the processes out of the process. They give you answers! They help to unpack and test assumptions and early ideas (we call them Idealings) at breakneck speed (compared to the norm).

#### What Barriers Can An Innovation Sprint Knock Over?

##### 1. Good ideas are not prematurely killed

Often with ideation, so much time is spent conversing and exploring the barriers in an initial concept that the idea is never even given a chance to be explored. Sprints remove these hurdles and enable quick discovery of opportunities without the need for endless deliberation. You have to try ideas quickly and be able to fail fast to find the ideas that are most viable and commercially sound.

##### 2. No time or budget for rigour, but still want to keep the consumer at the heart

With new, faster timelines for product innovation, many companies don't have as much time for the rigour of conventional market research, but they still want to find a way to keep the consumer at the heart of everything they do.

Innovation Sprints give you enough consumer insight to build a case around what your consumer wants and why. Answers are usually qualitative in nature, best for assessing desirability and where all the holes and gaps are in an idea. It's an extremely early form of concept validation if you like. What they don't give you is a fully developed proposition and the

detailed execution of the idea – for example, the name, product descriptor, claims, product and pack format, size, usability etc. The depth of consumer insight from an Innovation Sprint is unlikely to give decision makers all the insights they need, but it ensures you are getting buy-in from the right stakeholders early in the process.

**3. Stakeholder team is not galvanised and/ or aligned**  
The Innovation Sprint format gives a way to focus the attention on the team on a very specific problem.

The exercises are all designed to reduce politics, increase collaboration across functions and put focus on answers, and not just assets. The team is empowered to make decisions and reject ideas that weren't right for the project – without pushback. This keeps the whole process moving forward quickly. Also, the specific expertise of team members is fully flexed throughout the Sprint. By enlisting the help of the right people at the right time, it helps to drive both speed and efficiency.

An Innovation Sprint workshop is completely scalable in terms of how many Sprint Strategists are used, how many of your team are involved in the process, the number of ideas worked on, external resources brought in, location, etc. We recommend up to 8 people who are all equipped and empowered to make decisions there and then. In summary, Innovation Sprints are a powerful and agile tool for ideation that can deliver;

- A good balance of speed and depth of information
- The ability to iterate more quickly
- Flexibility in how the team gets to answers
- Empowerment to make decisions and feel good about the decisions being made

There is no one-size fits all for innovation sprints. We have learned that there are times when another strategic approach is best for our clients. We've also seen how they can help teams make critical strategic decisions, with confidence, very quickly.

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**About the Author**

Shelly Greenway is a front-end innovation strategist and partner at The Strategy Distillery – a brand innovation consultancy that specializes in opportunity hunting and proposition development.

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Publication issued on 1 October 2020

**The difference between Covid-19, cold and flu symptoms**

Symptoms	Coronavirus Symptoms range from mild to severe	Cold Gradual onset of symptoms	Flu Rapid onset of symptoms
<b>Fever</b> 37.8C or above	Common	Rare	Common
<b>Fatigue</b>	Sometimes	Sometimes	Common
<b>Cough</b>	Common (usually dry)	Common (usually mild)	Common (usually dry)
<b>Loss of sense of taste/smell</b>	Common	Sometimes	Sometimes
<b>Sneezing</b>	No	Common	No
<b>Aches and pains</b>	Sometimes	Common	Common
<b>Runny or stuffy nose</b>	Rare	Common	Sometimes
<b>Sore throat</b>	Sometimes	Common	Sometimes
<b>Diarrhoea</b>	Rare	No	Sometimes (for children)
<b>Headaches</b>	Sometimes	Rare	Common
<b>Shortness of breath</b>	Sometimes	No	No

Guardian graphic. Source: NHS, WHO, CDC



# businessVision

## We are different to other accountants

We work much more closely with our clients than traditional accountants. We also have a much smaller number of clients than normal and are selective in the clients that we act for. We want to get to know our clients businesses inside out, enabling us to easily identify problems and spot opportunities. We want to help improve profits and encourage growth.

## Our mission is to always add value

Whatever we do for you, we will always carry out our work with the aim of adding value to your business. We run a very cost effective business by making the most of modern technology and homeworking, but we will never be the cheapest solution. John Ruskin defined value as follows:

"It's unwise to pay too much, but it's also unwise to pay too little. When you pay too much you lose a little money, that is all. When you pay too little, you sometimes lose everything, because the thing you bought was incapable of doing the thing you bought it to do.

The common law of business balance prohibits paying a little and getting a lot. It can't be done. If you deal with the lowest bidder, it's well to add something for the risk you run. And if you do that, you will have enough money to pay for something better."

## A unique feature of our service is fixed price agreements

Once we have established your needs we will give you a guaranteed fully inclusive price from the start. This will give you peace of mind and no surprise bills.

## Background

businessVision are a small friendly firm of Chartered Accountants specialising in small and medium sized businesses. The practice was formed by Marc Lawson in 1985.

Our aim is to provide small and medium sized businesses with information and advice that goes beyond the traditional accountancy services of preparing accounts and tax returns.

businessVision benefit from having a stable number of long serving team members and a reputation in the South West as being a practice that is different from the typical accountancy practice, is small and friendly, but able to offer the type of services more commonly associated with large accountancy firms.

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## Our philosophy is to provide a high value service by:

- Providing the best possible service
- Aiming to continually exceed our clients' expectations
- Making the time to really listen to the needs of our clients
- Suggesting ideas to improve profits and help the business grow
- Providing professional expertise in order to proactively identify opportunities and provide solutions
- Being an indispensable part of your business

## This is achieved by:

- Maintaining a small portfolio of high quality clients
- Employing qualified individuals with a zest for business
- Investing in training and I.T.

## We are members of the following professional bodies:

